FOREIGN SERV[illegible] OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY : UNCLASSIFIED

PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

TO : Department of State

755.00/5-2350
XR 75511

FROM : BRUSSELS 694 May 23, 1950

2 enclosures

REF : Royal Question

SUBJECT : BELGIAN ELECTIONS

For Dept. use only.

RECD MAY 27

ACTION EUR *

INFO DCR UNA OLI IE USUN

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There are enclosed a pastoral letter signed by Cardinal Van Roey, Archbishop of Malines, and five Belgian Bishops which was read in the Catholic churches of Belgium on May 21 and a translation of that part of the letter which by implication urges Catholics to vote P.S.C. in view of the "critical situation" in Belgium, i.e., the Royal Question.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1950 MAY 27 PM 2 58
DC/R
RECORDS BRANCH

Chalmers B. Wood
Third Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:
1) Newspaper clipping from La Libre Belgique of May 18, 1950.
2) English translation thereof.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1950 MAY 31 AM 9 14

OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MESSAGE [illegible]

755.00/5-2350

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY J.L. SMITH DATE NOV 1 7 1982

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Enc. No. 1 to Brussels Despatch
No. 694 of May 23, 1950

La Libre Belgique, May 18, 1950

Les prochaines élections décideront de l'avenir des institutions fondamentales de la patrie

L.B. 5/18

déclarent le Cardinal-archevêque et les évêques de Belgique dans une lettre pastorale qui sera lue dans toutes les églises

Nos Très Chers Frères,

Nous croyons remplir un devoir de notre ministère pastoral en appelant votre attention sur les graves obligations qui s'imposent à toute conscience chrétienne. Pasteurs des âmes, nous n'avons pas comme tels à nous occuper de questions purement politiques, et nous nous interdisons en temps ordinaire de nous mêler aux luttes et aux compétitions des partis, sinon pour recommander et inculquer le respect de tous les droits, la justice et la charité envers les personnes et l'union de toutes les bonnes volontés.

Mais, dans la situation critique où se trouve le pays, tous ceux qui réfléchissent un instant doivent se rendre compte de l'importance exceptionnelle que prendront les élections législatives et provinciales prochaines. Elles décideront, de toute évidence, de l'avenir des institutions fondamentales de notre patrie. Elles diront si les menaces de lutte scolaire et d'offensive antireligieuse, proférées dans certains milieux politiques, se réaliseront, au grand dam de la paix des consciences et de la concorde entre citoyens.

Nous demandons donc à tous les hommes et à toutes les femmes de bons sens, quelles que soient par ailleurs leurs opinions philosophiques, de considérer la gravité et les conséquences de l'acte qu'ils accompliront en exprimant leur suffrage.

Nous recommandons spécialement à tous les catholiques d'avoir en vue uniquement les intérêts supérieurs qui sont en jeu, de regarder les principes plutôt que les personnes, de ne voter que pour des candidats dont le programme tient compte des droits de la conscience chrétienne.

Confions, Nos Chers Frères, nos destinées avant tout au Tout-Puissant, et recourons à l'infinie miséricorde de son Cœur par la prière fervente, confiante et persévérante, afin qu'Il daigne étendre sa main protectrice sur la Belgique en ces circonstances critiques.

A cet effet, nous ordonnons :

1) Les litanies du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus seront récitées publiquement après la Messe principale, chaque jour, jusqu'à la fin du mois de juin.

2) Aux saluts du Saint Sacrement, on chantera, après l'antienne « Parce, Domine », le psaume « Qui habitat » avec les oraisons, jusqu'à la fin du mois de juin.

3) Dans les chapelles des maisons religieuses qui possèdent la Sainte Réserve, on pourra avoir l'exposition et l'adoration du Saint Sacrement pendant une heure chaque jour, et pendant quatre heures les dimanches et les jours de fêtes jusqu'à la fin de l'octave de la fête du Sacré-Cœur.

Nous exhortons vivement les fidèles à célébrer, aux mêmes intentions, avec une ferveur et une confiance toutes filiales, les jours restants du mois de Marie, et à faire du mois de juin tout entier, un hommage impressionnant d'adorations, de supplications et de pénitences réparatrices au Cœur Sacré de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ. Que la fête du Sacré-Cœur soit le point culminant de cette pieuse croisade et qu'elle soit célébrée, cette année, avec une dévotion intense dans toutes les paroisses.

La présente lettre sera lue dans toutes les églises et chapelles publiques, à toutes les messes, le dimanche après la fête de l'Ascension.

† Ernest-Joseph, cardinal van Roey, archevêque de Malines.
† Louis-Joseph, évêque de Liège.
† Henri, évêque de Bruges.
† André-Marie, évêque de Namur.
† Charles-Justin, évêque de Gand.
† Charles-Marie, évêque de Tournai.

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Enclosure No. 2 to Brussels
Desp. No. 694 of May 23, 1950.

From La Libre Belgique of May 18, 1950

Translation

Our very dear brothers,

We believe that we are fulfilling a duty of our pastoral ministry in calling your attention to the grave obligations which are imposed on every Christian conscience. Pastors of souls, we do not as such occupy ourselves with purely political questions and we forbid ourselves in ordinary times from becoming involved in the struggles and competitions of the parties except in order to recommend and inculcate the respect of all laws, of justice, and of charity towards men and the union of all good desires.

But, in the critical situation in which our country finds itself all those who reflect for a moment know the exceptional importance that the approaching legislative and provincial elections have. There is every indication that they will decide the future of our fundamental institutions. They will tell whether the menaces of the scholastic struggle and the anti-religious offensive put forward by certain political groups will take place to the great damage of the peace of consciences and of concord between citizens.

We thus ask all men and women of good sense, whatever may otherwise be their philosophic opinions, to consider the gravity and consequences of the act which they will accomplish in casting their vote.

We especially recommend to all Catholics to keep in view the superior interests which are at stake, to look to the principles rather than to the personalities, to vote only for candidates whose program will take into account the rights of Christian conscience.

* * * * * * *

/s/ Ernest-Joseph, Cardinal Van Roey, Archbishop of Malines.
Louis-Joseph, Bishop of Liège.
Henri, Bishop of Bruges.
André-Marie, Bishop of Namur.
Charles-Justin, Bishop of Gand.
Charles-Marie, Bishop of Tournai.

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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SECURITY : UNCLASSIFIED PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

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TO : Department of State

DEPT. OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MESSAGE CENTER

755.00/5-2550 EUR INDEX

RECD June 3

FROM : BRUSSELS 708 MAY 25, 1950

REF :

1950 JUN 6 AM 9 56

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT : Belgian Press, May 18 - 21

ACTION INFO

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HEADLINES: London Atlantic Conference; Schuman Proposal; Coming Belgian Elections

INTERNATIONAL

London Atlantic Conference: London correspondent of independent LE SOIR remarks new fact ascertainable at conference is desire for closer cooperation, and conservative HET VOLK states two proposals put forward for Supreme Atlantic Council and Atlantic army are expression of desire to make forces of West yield better results by amalgamation. According to independent LA LANTERNE, conference marks beginning of new era of almost total cooperation in military, financial and economic fields; considerable progress is about to be accomplished in Western organization. Stating Supreme Atlantic Council would be formed along lines of SHAEF, presided over by American civil personality, special correspondent of conservative LA NATION BELGE suggests this would be only first step toward creation of single economic and military High Command as proposed by Dulles. Writer believes Brussels Treaty organization would be dissolved or integrated in new Atlantic organization. Socialist LE PEUPLE says it will not be possible to vanquish Communism in West Europe completely so long as peoples still believe they are defenseless against Soviet attack; value of conference results will depend on extent to which they remove this fear. Conservative HET HANDELSBLAD concludes from communiques' "very general terms" that few concrete results have been achieved. Commenting communiques "amount to little", conservative DE NIEUWE GIDS states they reveal US desiderata are seriously hindered by material and political problems. Paper remarks news that US possesses baby atomic bomb will hardly stimulate those partners who generally lag behind when it comes to make practical contribution to West European defense. Conservative HET VOLK says news of baby atomic bomb will confirm European opinion that cold war or third world war mainly concerns US and USSR and that their financial sacrifices for old-fashioned weapons would be but futile contribution in conflict. Remarking communiques' "trumpet blast in honor of freedom" fails to conceal fact that only military, and not financial or economic, problems were tackled, conservative DE STANDAARD feels exaltation of idea of Western freedom will accentuate contrast with East and increase danger of war. Conservative LA LIBRE BELGIQUE, reporting US will be responsible for strategic air and naval operations, the British for tactical air operations and naval protection of convoys, continental countries providing land forces, says risks are badly divided which explains continental opposition to plan.

Schuman Proposal: Commenting on Schuman's proposal to pool French-German coal and steel industries, liberal LA NOUVELLE GAZETTE anticipates British resistance to plan but believes it can be overcome by German and French determination. Pointing out Britain's military and economic contributions to

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European recovery are far from negligible, London correspondent of independent LE SOIR says Britain displays timidity only toward more ambitious schemes; anything resembling European federation frightens Britain because she will not be forced to choose between Europe and Commonwealth. Socialist LE PEUPLE states Bevin has asked only those questions about Schuman's plan which a Socialist should ask; in Labor's opinion it is impossible to neglect proposal of such scope but Britain must demand guarantees Bevin deems necessary. Only by her presence can Britain neutralize dangerous aspects of scheme. Financial LA COTE LIBRE fears scheme resembles form of underhand nationalization for which Benelux will foot bill; small nations must not be faced with accomplished fact by big powers under pretext of collective defense requirements. Financial LLOYD ANVERSOIS comments Belgian industrial circles would prefer private agreements which would avoid danger of government controls; project should be welcomed in view of its novel nature, but Belgian markets must not be sacrificed and port of Antwerp must be safeguarded. According to conservative DE GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN Schuman plan gives much more practical security basis for Europe than all the high-flown economic and defensive plans for cooperation produced before.

European Economic Integration: Press headlines Acheson's statement that US will continue aid to Europe after expiration of Marshall Plan. Several papers comment favorably on proposal that Canada and US join OEEC. Conservative DE NIEUWE GIDS reports proposal in New York speech of economic adviser of Bank of Brussels, Ameye, for Atlantic Economic Union as only way of solving long-term problems of Western economy after expiration of Marshall aid.

Germany: Independent LE SOIR publishes interview with Adenauer who again emphasized importance of Schuman plan and stressed fact that Germany's diplomatic isolation must come to end; mutual understanding is impossible so long as normal diplomatic relations are not restored. Remarking Belgium should adapt her attitude to inevitable integration of Germany into Western Europe, conservative DE NIEUWE GIDS says officially and otherwise contacts with Germany are made difficult and Belgian public is ill-informed of events in Germany. Lessons of past should not be forgotten, but greatest danger lies, not in Germany's rearmament, but in her isolation which would allow her to pursue policy of blackmail and to play off West against East.

BELGIUM

Coming Belgian Elections: Rightist press publishes pastoral letter from Cardinal and Bishops which was read in all Belgian churches, stating Bishops are not concerned with purely political questions, but they do stress exceptional importance of forthcoming elections which will determine future of country's fundamental institutions; elections will decide if threat of educational strife and of anti-religious offensive, made in certain political circles, will be implemented. All Catholics should keep their eyes on high interests at stake, remember principles rather than people, and vote only for candidates whose programs take account of rights of Christian conscience. Socialist LE PEUPLE remarks although Bishops mention no party by name, it is fairly obvious they mean PSC; by recommending voting for principles rather than for people, Bishops presumably hope to offset deplorable effect PSC's alliance with Flemish Concentration has had on many Christians. Socialist VOLKSGAZET states moderate elements in PSC have no say; but even if they could make their moderate solution of royal question prevail, they would receive no help from Socialists. If PSC brings Leopold back, Socialists will consider him as candidate of one party only and will not rest until he is evicted; in event of clear PSC majority, PSC must in no circumstances rely on cooperation or benevolent opposition of the Socialists.

ROBERT MURPHY
American Ambassador

R.M.